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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to examine current concepts and procedures of community college governance in the United States and the United Kingdom. Agendas and minutes of board meetings were analyzed and interviews were conducted with administrators and board members at four institutions, one rural and one urban from each country. The participating colleges were Burton Manor College (BMC), in Cheshire, England; Blackpool and the Fylde College (BFC), in Lancashire, England; Mid-Plains Community College (MPCC), in North Platte, Nebraska; and Metropolitan Community College (MCC), in Omaha, Nebraska. At BMC the board was very political, as 9 of the 15 members were party-affiliated members of the local city council, while at BFC the board had to accommodate individuals involved in the predominant industries of the area. Board membership for both Nebraska institutions was open to the general citizenry, and no compensation was given to board members. The boards of all four colleges restructured themselves annually by electing their own officers, although the British did not utilize the operational committees employed at the Nebraska college boards. Unlike the Nebraska college boards, the British boards did not use Robert's Rules of Order and the board chair exerted a much stronger control over the meeting. While the Nebraska boards met in open session with mandatory voice votes, the British boards met in private session. Recommendations related to board membership, organization, and meetings. Contains 10 references; the interview guide is included. (MAB)

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A DESCRIPTIVE COMPARISON OF SOME GOVERNANCE CHARACTERISTICS IN SELECTED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS, U.S. AND U.K.

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INTRODUCTION

This is a paper devoted to the discovery of some concepts and procedures that predominate in the governance of community colleges. It is specific to limited post secondary institutions that do not offer bachelor degrees, that are by tradition and organization, strongly interested in vocational preparations. It is a transatlantic comparison, with data derived from institutions in the United Kingdom and the United States. There are four parts: Introduction, Data and Observations, Analysis, and Recommendations.

The research design is descriptive, with data generated (1) from careful reading and analysis of agendas and minutes of meetings of governing boards; and (2) from on site interviews of administrators and governing board members. The design demanded an on campus presence of the researcher. By their nature, the data melded into an information base amenable to analysis by both comparison and contrast, with the interviews organized in similar structures. Comparison and contrast are time-tested tools for indicating directions of change and development. Applied analytically in the study of organizations, they are as effective in postmodern chaos theory as in early twentieth century Weberian theory. That very history of effectiveness is evidence of the reliability of these research tools. They provided reference points from which judgements and recommendations could be made as a researcher considered, analyzed, and synthesized data, moving toward conclusions. They were the logical tools from which to manage the descriptive data of this particular research effort.

The current setting for this study of governance characteristics included the historical commonality of the English speaking peoples, a radically changing economic format over the entire world, shrinking support for desired institutional budgets in many places, and the conventional disputes between administrators and board members that have been present throughout the century. Searches for problem solutions have been apparent in widely varied research approaches. Substantial time, effort and money was expended in the Transatlantic dialogue of the 1990s, in discussion of the place of higher education in society, generally. Participants, especially the Americans, were agitated by such profound problems as drift from central mission, maintaining the institution's integrity, and acceptance of functional overload. Although mainly devoted to the study of universities, the immensity of current problems led to discussions of deconstruction--not reconstruction--that could apply to all postsecondary institutions.[1] Actually, reconstruction appears to be a more viable, a less socially disruptive route to the development of knowledgeable, widely educated persons.

Contemporary socio/economic change rates differ from anything in the history of (western) civilizations. Globalization by way of electronic technology was never before possible. Now upon America and other developed nations, reality has become so altered that problem solution patterns of the past have decreased effectiveness. To the extent that the world is economics driven,

we have moved into a post industrial, postmodern, postcapitalist time. Uncertain futures have led several observers to write about chaos as a constant partner for all organizations. For example, capital flows globally; competition, via inventiveness; changes radically and swiftly; business and national alliances are short term and strategic.[2] Incorporating such concepts, and with an eye to the competitive international economics, Baker and More developed a persuasive design for community colleges to meet such challenges via the education of our citizens to ensure a world-class work force.[3]

Drucker's comments on massive world transformations are pertinent to community colleges. The industrial society has been supplanted by the knowledge-information society, a place and time where technical knowledge becomes obsolete in about four or five years. Purposeful innovation, then, is just the kind of change that must be embraced by any organization that sees itself in a continuous improvement posture. People become central in the operation of every such organization and those people who are the organization's leaders must balance economic responsibility with responsibility that the organization has in its whole environment. Community college leaders must promote patterns of a knowledge society, and must themselves be inspirations for all the workers in the whole institution to show connections between the college and society. Not incidentally, leadership must face the condition that enhanced worker autonomy will likely lead to less local

allegiance.[4] Such conditions provide new opportunities and obligations for the instructional patterns of community colleges. This particular transatlantic research was conducted under a conceptual criterion to consider the effectiveness with which four selected such colleges were acting, and the leadership provided by their governing boards.

A cogent statement on the argument for changes in institutions was made by Parnell, especially in the chapter entitled, "They Aren't Acting Their Age." If anything, that book is not strong enough in recognizing the need for change. With data collected from a wide variety of sources, he emerged as a confident advocate for the pattern of community college education that he was assessing in the 1980s. Yet, a substantial part of what was described and advocated as meeting the needs of quite varied student bodies of the 1990s, can now be seen as having several flaws simply because of an underestimation of the rate of change in the world. Services and products that people want to buy are being invented and designed at such rapid rates that considerations of change must be a major issue in planning for effective college offerings.[5] He could not have foreseen, either, the huge impact, now visible in California, of the large drop in student registration, consequent of slashes in state funding for community colleges.

Such are the larger forces now influencing the moves toward change on the community college scene. O'Banion has commented on

the need to move sharply from the concerns of the 1960s and 1970s, such as organization, facilities, and political alliances. Those areas cannot continue to be foremost concerns because they are no longer primarily related to the great concerns of "the outside world." With no intent to diminish what has been accomplished, future development must include a "...clear mandate to place teaching and learning at the top of the educational agenda in order to repair the neglect of the past and prepare for a new future..."[6]

There is an abundance of information about community colleges. Board members governing those colleges must know something of what went before, true enough, but the governance focus must shift from the historical to the anticipatory. If the tenth or eleventh centuries are considered as a start time for contemporary higher education, generally, the entry of vocational or practical education into programs of higher education has been much more recent. Schools for the study of science came only 150 years ago, and the prejudice against adapting that content into practical, vocational education in post secondary settings still prevails in the U.S. If the curriculum of community colleges can be justified by way of products and services needed by society -- now, and as indicated for the future -- board members should be confident of their good performance.[7]

Membership on community college boards is supposed to be a tough job, with a wide variety of responsibilities. It demands

suppression of self interest. Meeting regularly, boards must have structure, but success demands an interaction of personalities to enhance trust and diminish contentiousness. Working as a team, board members come to feel at ease with one another.[8] As important as board procedures and oversight may be, they cannot be empty of substance. Carver's views emphasize a substance that goes beyond the mundane aspects of board business, insisting that successful boards do go beyond that point. Arguing that boards must move from the minutae to the conceptual for their focus, Carver points out that as boards focus on the ends for the institution, they tend to address the big questions. Harmonizing with the global setting of the 1990s, he stipulates that when boards express organizational values and perspectives in the largest forms, they must of necessity focus on planning, visioning, and ethics.[9] Governance is bridging the distance between the institution's owners (the supporting public) and the institutions operators (faculty, staff and administration) who are hired by the board. To accomplish this governance mode calls for a holistic view by the board.

Acknowledging a necessity for a futures orientation, and from a very briefly stated perspective, then, this research endeavor was launched, carried forward in a descriptive-comparative design. Inquiries were made to chief administrative officers of likely institutions. Four agreed to participate. Two were in the United States; two were in the United Kingdom.

Selection of participating institutions also involved diversity. In each nation, one of the colleges was rural and one was urban in setting. After initial inquiry that involved letters and telephone conversations, the four institutions and their chief administrators were identified.

1. Burton Manor College (rural)
   Burton, South Wirral
   Cheshire L64 5SJ
   England
   Janet Dawson, Principal

2. Blackpool and the Fylde College (urban)
   Bispham Campus
   Ashfield Road
   Lancashire FY2 OHB
   England
   Michael McAllister, Principal

3. Mid-Plains Community College (rural)
   416 North Jeffers
   North Platte, NE 69101
   U.S.A.
   William Hasemeyer, Chancellor

4. Metropolitan Community College (urban)
   Fort Omaha Campus
   30th and Fort
   Omaha, NE 68103-0777
   Richard Gilliland, President

Procedurally, each chief administrator agreed to spend at least half of one day with the researcher in interview. In addition, each agreed to provide in advance of the interview, board agendas and minutes. Interviews (structured by a guide, see Appendix A) were also arranged with other administrators and board members; additional information, especially recent statutes, was provided. The interviewer agreed to write a summary of each interview and send it back to the college for examination,

correction and return. With the return of the revised and accurate interview summary, the data collection was complete, and ready for analysis and comparison by the researcher.

DATA AND OBSERVATIONS

Interview Summary

Burton Manor College (April 1993)
Recorder: Robert O'Reilly

Interviewees
Janet Dawson, Principal, five years in place, and a member of the governing board.

Keith Chandler, Assistant Principal, two years in place, frequent attender of meetings of the governing board.

Peter Morgan, Honorary Secretary of the governing board, seven years on the board.

The College

Located in a small village between Chester and Liverpool, Burton Manor is an old 30 acre estate, converted to a college under the authority of the Education Act of 1944. The facilities show a contrast of quality in maintenance, located in a beautiful pastoral setting. The board does not have powers of general taxation, so the College has a dependency upon money allocations from the Liverpool Education Authority, and what it can raise through programs that attract students and provide income from attendees. Other educational enterprises compete for funds from the Liverpool Education Authority, a subdivision of the Liverpool City Council. The college facilities provide overnight accommodations for a maximum of 72 persons. Kitchen and dining is provided, as is car parking. Under this condition, Burton Manor styles itself as a residential college.

Administration

The administration consists of two persons, with a small secretarial-general support staff of five full time employees. The two administrators are also the entire full time faculty, teaching as appropriate opportunities arise. All other faculty are part time, hired from a roster kept by the principal, and which consists of about 60-70 likely and competent persons who can give short courses. Fees paid by students vary according to the topic, number of meetings, and so on; part time faculty are on contingency contracts. Balancing some of the curriculum consists of weekend meetings held over 1-2 years as students pursue a

specialty to be attested by a diploma. The college advertises its programs nationally, and some students come from distant parts of the U.K. With an emphasis on "week end" course work, accreditation -- and its costs -- is not a major concern, a position with which the current board concurs.

Governing Board

The board consist of 15 persons. It is very political, because nine of those members come from the Liverpool City Council. That Council consists of 99 members, all of whom run for election on some political ticket. Some of those 99 members are Labor Party, some Liberal Democrats, some Liverpool Labor, and a few others. Therefore, each of the nine members of the Burton Manor Board who come from the Liverpool City Council have specific political roots that form a constituency influence. The other six Board members are "expert" in designing education endeavors appropriate for Burton Manor, giving attention to its location in a petro-chemical area of the U.K., its finances, its past practice, and so on. Three members are appointees from the University of Liverpool. The principal is included in the board. The Board has four regular meetings per year, following an agenda developed by the principal in consultation with board members. Burton Manor's mission and location is rather unique. It was exempted because it enrolled no full-time students, along with a few similar institutions, from the radical change of governing boards, as set forward in the 1988 Education Reform Act.

Board meetings typically start with an informal "Chair's Conference" that is held privately, lasts for only a few minutes, and seems to be a kind of equivalent to side bar negotiations in collective bargaining. Under an operating format established in recent years, the board meeting ends with a social time and a dinner. Records indicate that the current format has produced much improved attendance by board members at meetings. The board does not operate under Robert's Rules of Order. Vigorous discussion of agenda items is encouraged, and that activity runs the gamut from disputatious to easy, head nodding agreement. Votes on issues are often not taken. The chair is active as a negotiator, sensing differing positions and moving the board toward consensus. When that seems to be an existing condition, the chair raises that very question, and if consensus is evident, that agenda issue is closed, and the next one is opened. When agreement (consensus) is apparently lacking, the chair, with some sense of the passage of time, acknowledges that condition, and the issue is laid over for a subsequent meeting, allowing the board to move forward to a next agenda item. The board may address any issue it chooses. It operates as it does now, in "a spirit of goodwill," and support for the College. It is not a part of its "Constitution" to act as it does. In the past, it has on many occasions voted on issues. Abbreviated minutes of board meetings

are kept. Board members do not have a policy book. They do have records of past practice and current vision statements prepared under the supervision of the principal as guides to action.

Interview Summary

Blackpool and The Fylde College (April 1993)
Recorder: Robert O'Reilly

Interviewees
Michael McAllister, Principal, 16 years in place, and a member of the governing board.
Neville Percival, 22 years in place, Bursar and Clerk of the governing board.

The College

A multi campus college, Blackpool has four major locations, and has specified learning centers located strategically in the urban area. For example, the college bakery, manned by students under instruction, is downtown. It has a posture of expansion, and that applies to both physical plant and educational programs. Within a budget of about $30 million, the college includes several contracts for specified training and education. Presently, outside contracts account for about $3 million; several of those are in consortia and international. Faculty are often on assignment away for consultancy. Such work is conceived as faculty development and about 20% of present faculty have done such assignments. Every such contract is designed to yield income well above cost to the college. There are about 24,000 students presently enrolled, half of whom are in the 16, 17, 18 CA range and the other half might be classified as adults. They represent a wide spectrum in achievement levels. The college programs involve a responsiveness to the area's dominant economic base: chemical industries and resort enterprises, and to projected trends in the nation's vocational training needs.

Administration

The administration consists of the principal, a group of next level administrators and specialty support staff, as well as the necessary classified to keep the organization running. The principal sees himself as a manager, and follows a dictum accordingly: "An administrator follows the rules; a manager works beyond the rules." A faculty of 320 full time persons is augmented by about 600 part time faculty, and this latter group does about 20% of all the teaching. In Blackpool, and the U.K., achievement by students is based on exhibiting competence, and time is a variable. Students in the technical/vocational areas work for diplomas that are evidence of competence, and those diplomas may be achieved in the same field, at the same level of

competence, but in different time frameworks. Class completion and accumulation of credits is not a goal. Students might work for multiple diplomas. For example, a diploma chef might want to also accomplish a diploma as a cafeteria manager. Prior to CA 18, there are no tuition charges. Grants, not loans, are made through the federal government for about 90% of all students beyond CA 18. There are no statutory limits on numbers of students that can be registered, nor on program offerings. Some students might be in programs for four years.

Blackpool is not a new college, but is included in the group of U.K. institutions that were obligated under the Further and Higher Education Act of 1992, as well as all previous legislation. That recent legislation, preemptive as of April 1, 1993, had as one goal a restructuring of local governing boards with at least two specified goals: (1) depoliticizing membership and (2) ensuring an enlarged presence of persons from business and industry. On that day, the new board -- a corporation -- received by statutory provision, all of the assets and liabilities of the existing college.

Historically, Blackpool governing board membership once included 25 persons. That number was then reduced to 20, and in April 1993, the number of board members stands at 14. By attrition, the goal is to move to a board of 12 by April 1994. Statutorily, the minimum size for the board is ten. The importance of business representation can be found in the statutory explanation of quorum. For a ten person board, a quorum may be as low as four (i.e., 40%), but of that number, at least two must be members who are from the business community.

The board is self perpetuating. That is, now in existence, it must reform itself with a balance of membership specified in law. Age, criminal record, employment status, are among the conditions specified for eligibility of membership. The board searches by way of a Search Committee for persons who are eligible and interested. None are elected in the sense of running for office as a candidate. The board selects its own officers, as specified in statute, and establishes both regular and special committees. Agendas are prepared by the clerk of the board, consulting with the principal and the chair of the board. Agendas are circulated 7 days in advance of the meeting, accompanied by briefing papers devoted to each agenda item.

Typically, board meetings run to about two hours, three hours maximum. The board has been meeting four times per year, but is presently inclining toward nine meetings per year. The chair functions as observer, negotiator and expeditor, watching the discussion and reducing conflicts among members. Meetings are generally smooth, facilitated by the briefing papers; straw votes

are common, leading to resolutions. Voice votes are not taken: actual voting may be by raised hand, by nod of the head, by the chair's declaration of perceived standing. For example, the chair might say, "I hear that all are in favor of this resolution." That "vote" would be recorded for the minutes as unanimously in favor. Voice votes and membership splits may occur, but they are generally viewed as detrimental. The chair solicits discussion, and leads toward conclusion of issues, because amicable settlement is an operational goal. The clerk of the board is responsible for minutes. Both agendas and minutes are available for public scrutiny, but the actual meetings of the board are not open. The college does not keep a policy book.

Interview Summary

Mid Plains Community College (May 1993)
Recorder: Robert O'Reilly

Conversants
William Hasemeyer, Chancellor, 20 years in place; six years in other positions.
Ken Aten, President, Vocational-Technical Campus, 26 years in place (with this and other job titles).

The College

Serving a population base of about 92,000 people in eighteen counties, the facilities of the college consists of three campuses: two in North Platte and one in McCook. In addition, extensive vocational-technical courses are offered at Broken Bow, McCook and Valentine. The curriculum specialty of the Vocational-Technical campus in North Platte is revealed in its name. The present institution is an extension-recreation of earlier post secondary colleges in midwestern Nebraska, and was established in 1973. A statutorily limited power to tax property in the service area provides about 43% of annual revenue; the remainder is derived from tuition charged to students and from the state, by way of a formula that applies to all six of the state's community colleges. Tuition is charged uniformly at the rate of $27.00 per semester credit hour for all three campuses. The unduplicated credit hour student headcount for summer 1992 was 983; for fall 1992 was 3176; for spring 1993 was 2895. Characteristically, the Voc-Tech students carry 18 credit hours, while the academic transfer students at the other two campuses carry 15 credit hours. It was estimated that about 80% of the faculty teaching academic courses are full time while about 50% of the faculty teaching vocational-technical courses are full time. That predominance of part time faculty dictate an extended technical on-the-job experience within the vocational-technical group.

Administration

The administration consists of a chancellor, the chief operating officer, and support staff that includes a president on each of the three campuses of the college. The total payroll for FY 1993, including fringe benefits and both full time and part time employees is $7,011,192. The proportionately heavy number of part time faculty in the voc-tech areas assure a close community relationship for the college. Excluding any rental spaces, the facilities of the college are valued at $10,480,138. Curricular programs undergo periodic evaluation upon specified criteria; those not meeting minimum criteria after having been examined by campus presidents, are recommended to the chancellor for board action and elimination. With only a very few special exceptions, entering students have all concluded a typical K-12 curriculum, or have qualified by way of the GED examination.

Governing Board

The eleven member board conforms to the state's statutes, representing specific population groups in the 18 county area -- some of which are uniquely sparse in population density. The board organizes itself at the beginning of each calendar year and is responsible for the operation of the college. Presently, it has placed no limits on student registration; conversely, there have been occasional expressions of concern from the board about too low registrations in some voc-tech courses. In meeting standards such as may be set by accrediting bodies, some of those courses are capped at ratios of 1:8, creating a noticeably higher than average instructional cost.

The board has four standing committees: Instructional and Community Service; Finance; Campus Development; Personnel; at another time, there was a Legislative Committee, but not at the present. The committees meet on the call of the Chancellor, and this is not on the same night as the board convenes. All members are informed of any committee meeting. Some are held via telephone. Coming from a wide geographic area which is the most sparsely settled of any of the community college areas in the state, Mid Plains board members have a special need to be informed, simply because they come from "away." The chancellor recognizes this condition and is at ease with an inquiring board; board meetings are not rancorous, but board members are not timid about questioning what they do not understand.

Agendas are constructed by the chancellor. Items are solicited from the three campus presidents and other selected sources, and the chancellor judges each for appropriateness, and for timing. Prior to mailing the agenda and its supporting material, the chancellor and board president confer. Upon agreement, the agenda and materials are mailed seven calendar days

prior to the scheduled meeting of the board. The board meets monthly, and held no special meetings in 1992. Typically, meetings last for about three hours. Every board members has an up-to-date policy book, and the currently revised version will go to the board in June, 1993 for approval and acceptance.

Interview Summary

Metropolitan Community College (April 1993)
Recorder: Robert O'Reilly

Interviewees
J. Richard Gilliland, President, 13 years in place
Walt Kujawa, Executive Assistant, one year in place, 16 years in other positions at MCC

The College

Serving a four county area and a population base of about 570,000, the college consists of three primary campuses, two instructional centers, and other instructional spaces used on an as-needs basis, not owned by the college. MCC was established by a blending in 1974 of two much smaller colleges located in the Omaha area. The board has limited power to tax property in the four county area, but derives about 55% of its revenue from the combination of student tuition and allocations from the state treasury. As of summer 1993, tuition will be charged at the rate of $22.00 per quarter credit hour, or about $330 per term for a full student load. This will generate about 20% of needed revenue. Organized to offer instruction on a quarter basis, the unduplicated credit hour student headcount for summer 1992 was 6,088; for fall 1992, 10,301; for winter 1992, 8,444; for spring 1993, 9,095. A substantial part of the college's mission is accomplished by way of non credit courses, offered as business and industry personnel development, recreation, personal enhancement, and so on. Faculty for those courses are conventionally on contingency part-time contracts. Presently, MCC has no limits on number of students or numbers of programs, as long as those programs conform to statutory statements of the college's mission. MCC has 133 full time, tenure track faculty.

Administration

The administration consists of a president and a support staff with divided responsibilities, designated to work in a variety of areas that characterize any complex organization. This includes the areas of finance, community relations, curriculum, faculty, support staff, and so on. There are four vice presidents. Exclusive of all rented spaces, the value of property owned by the college has been set at $37,000,000*. The total

*This amount is the investment in plant and equipment.

payroll for all persons working at MCC for FY 1993 is $18,600,000**. With revenue flowing from three major sources, it is a primary administrative task to assure that the informational networks into the four county community, into the state legislature, into the area secondary schools, into the commercial-industrial sections of the community, and so on are open, active and accurate. MCC identifies about 67 persons as full time or part time in administrative positions.

Governing Board

The governing board is statutorily stipulated, consisting of eleven persons who are elected from districts established by population count. Candidates for the board do not run for election as political partisans. Members serve without pay. That board organizes itself annually, electing its own officers. The board is responsible for all aspects of the operation of MCC, within statutory directives. With no statutory limits on numbers of students or programs, the board may set such. Presently, limits are imposed by way of periodic qualitative examination of programs and decisions for extension or discontinuation. (Some of this may change, as the new Nebraska Commission for Higher Education determines how much decision making power it has and wants to exercise.) All meetings are open to the public, as legislatively directed, except that executive sessions may be held for specified and limited purposes.

The board convenes for regular meetings monthly, and typically has two-three special purpose meetings per year. Operationally, the MCC board has four standing committees. Historically embattled, with many votes coming at 6-5 and 7-4 during the 1970s, the fledgling institution has matured in that respect. Over the past five years, with more than 20 different individuals filling the eleven board seats, discussion has been inquisitive and thorough, but supporting and not contentious.

Meetings are structured and an agenda with supporting information is supplied to members at least four calendar days prior to meeting. General development of the agenda is in the hands of the president who consults the calendar, the staff, the board chair, chairs of the board committees, and such other sources as seem pertinent. Each agenda goes through at least two revisions, as a final agenda for every meeting is set. With every regular meeting preceded by a committee meeting, the length of a whole meeting is typically about three to four hours. They are tape recorded and a set of summarized minutes is produced for

**Estimate -- includes fringe benefits and includes full and part time employees.

approval at a next board meeting. From several sources, policy books have been developed, and every board member has a personal copy of an up-to-date policy book.

ANALYSIS

Observations about selected characteristics of governing boards of the four colleges are here presented in summary form. Burton Manor College has designed a curriculum to attract students from far away. Some classes are held far away from campus. Scheduling accommodates both arrangements. Tuition varies as a response to the cost of the offering. Full time staff is kept to a minimum number. Accreditation is not an interest. The 15 member board that is quite political, supports all of those conditions.

With majority membership coming from the Liverpool City Council, the board is a politically sensitive unit. Meeting agendas are developed by the principal, consulting with board members. Convening four times annually, meetings may include disputatious discussion, issues may come to a vote or the chair may declare a consensus or a lay over. There is no board policy book; past practice dictates continuing practice.

Blackpool and the Fylde College extends a curriculum dominated by training for services commonly found as necessary in a vacation spot. Students may work for more than one diploma; programs are competency based, a condition also true of Burton Manor. From multiple campuses, Blackpool provides substantial

programs for handicapped students. The board supports those conditions.

Like Burton, the Blackpool board only recently consisted of 25 members; however, in accord with Britain's Further and Higher Education Act of 1992, board size is being reduced to 12. Membership has been depoliticized, and by statute, a strong business-commerce representation must be brought onto the board. It has its own Search Committee, finding qualified and interested prospects in its geographical setting. The board is self-perpetuating. Agendas are prepared by the clerk of the board, consulting with the principal and board chair. Straw votes are common; voice votes are not taken. There is no board policy book.

Both Burton and Blackpool stipulated that board meetings were public, but understood public to mean providing an agenda for public scrutiny, and making minutes available upon request. Neither board met with "the public" in attendance, and explicitly, no media representative. While depoliticing the boards of all but a few quite small colleges, the British are demanding professional competencies for board members.

Mid Plains Community College serves an 18 county area, much of it sparsely populated. Occasionally, concern has been evidenced over low registrations in vocational/technical courses; however, most of those are limited by accreditation organizations. The board has four committees. They meet at the call of the chancellor and some of those may be via telephone. Typically,

discussions are neither rancorous nor timid. In 1992, the board met 12 times, and had no additional special meetings. Every member has an up-to-date policy book.

Agendas are built by an invitation from the chancellor to the three campus presidents. That becomes a basis for chancellor-board president discussion, and a final agenda is built. Every meeting is in accord with the state's open meeting law.

The Metropolitan Community College board meets monthly, convening at different sites; typically, there are 2-3 special meetings per year. Agendas are developed by the president, who consults widely before a final agenda is set. The four standing committees meet just prior to the board's meeting; together, then, meetings run to about 3-4 hours. Board members tend to discuss thoroughly, but not contentiously, a condition that has improved within the most recent decade of the colleges operation. Every meeting is accord with the state's "sunshine law."

For both Nebraska Colleges, the boards have 11 members as stated in law. The boards restructure themselves annually. Citizens run for election to the board on non-partisan ballots, with hardly any stipulated qualifications beyond residence and age. Likewise, both boards have a limited, but used, power for the taxation of real estate property within their respective area.

Reducing these conditions for increased specificity, several emerge for analysis in a structure of comparison and contrast.

1. Board membership

In Burton, members with political followings predominated, as a majority also were members of the Liverpool City Council. In Blackpool and under new statutes, membership had to accommodate individuals involved in the predominant industries of the area. For both, membership is by appointment, a self perpetuating characteristic. In both Nebraska institutions, board membership is open to the general citizenry; i.e., those who also have enough initiative to run for election without a political party providing support. It is a concept dominated by the idea of the populist image of citizens accepting public service without compensation. (Many states do provide compensation plans for board members, but even in those instances, it is nominal, depending on public spiritedness for motivation.)

2. Board Organization

In all four colleges, the boards restructure themselves annually, electing their own officers. In Britain, the boards work as a whole, ordinarily without operational committees, while the Nebraska colleges use them.

3. Board meetings

Taking note of different and changing numbers of persons as members among the four colleges the number of meetings vary from a high of 14-15 per year to a low of four per year. (Blackpool is considering an increase in the number of board meetings held each year.) The structure of the meetings are in contrast. The

Nebraska boards work by Robert's Rules of Order; can refer to policy books for guidance. Neither is in use by the British colleges, where past practice is the strong guide, but where, also, the board chair exerts a much stronger control over the meeting. Sometimes that control is most evident in pre-meeting, side bar conversations. The agendas, however, show little contrast with strong similarity in preparation, consultation, briefing/support materials, and time for submitting to board members. Perhaps the sharpest contrast is that Nebraska boards meet in open session with voice votes mandatory, while the British boards meet in private session, with many issues settled by the chair's perception of consensus or its absence, and declaring accordingly -- with no vote taken.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations that have been developed, and which follow, embrace a consideration of the data gathered from the four colleges. Additionally, this analyst has attempted to keep within that regard the general conditions that comprise the needs of persons trying to find their way in a work force that will be strong enough for the international economies of the 21st century. Some of the major aspects of that new world, as commonly projected, have been set forward in the introduction to this paper. Finally, the entirely is held together by this central question: What can be extracted from this study that promises to be most effective for the community colleges of America?

1. Board membership

For whatever may be said about the values of generally elected, unpaid members, performing an uncompensated public service, it is a much less direct way of performance improvement than by securing members who must come from the economic mainstream of the service area and who have "hands on" knowledge of what the current and prospective worker needs will be. The generally accepted values of expertise as a basis for decision making, then, indicates a stronger value in the recently altered British method, identifying competent and interested prospects. Of necessity, that method also calls for, at least in some part, a self perpetuating board, for it is unrealistic to suppose that expertise would come onto a board in some structured condition by way of a general election. In both statute and operation, the British have a system more closely attuned to what is known about organizational improvements.

2. Board organization

Much of what occurs in the boards of the four colleges is the same, as relates to organization. There is one major difference, and that is in standing committees that tend toward mundane operational aspects. That characteristic violates Carver's mandate (above) that boards must expand their concerns from the trivial to the substantive. If the committees deter board focus on planning, visioning, and ethical operation, they surely need to come up for effectiveness assessment. Again, the

large focus - fewer meetings seem to indicate a better arrangement by the British.

3. Board meetings

There may be several influences that impinge upon and direct how board meetings in America should proceed. Litigiousness may be one such influence; another may be the near-nationwide group of "sunshine laws." There is little dispute that meetings with the public (i.e., the press) attending, and voice votes on any issue that is to be settled are both conditions that depress discussion. That condition, also, influences boards to demonstrate conscientiousness; i.e., to focus on small, business items. Such openness may be necessary. There may be, in the British culture, enough restraint that secret agreements will not be made, to the advantage of individuals and the disadvantage of the organization. Too, all American boards must conform to statutory restrictions. It does seem clear, though, that British boards engage in more open discussion. The point of any board is to enhance the quality of decision making, and that by way of member participation. There is, then, an opportunity/obligation for American boards, recognizing statutory limits, to invent substantially modified procedures/topic for the improvement of effectiveness by way of more discussion. This seems to mean more attention to Carver's argument: an agenda of planning, visioning and ethics.

Finally, the most common reference point for changed behavior is to take note of what is being done in some other place

-- to compare, contrast, evaluate and select. That is the essence of this research which revealed that the community college institutions in the U. S. may look to their English speaking colleagues and find some very helpful patterns, if governing board performance improvement is the goal. Drucker said it concisely, "To turn around any institution requires always the same three steps:

(1) Abandonment of the things that do not work, the things that have never worked, the things that have outlined their usefulness and their capacity to contribute;

(2) Concentration on the things that do work, the things that produce results, the things that improve organizations ability to perform;

(3) Analysis of the half-success, the half-failures. A turnaround requires abandoning whatever does not perform and doing more of whatever does perform."[10]

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Appendix A

COMMUNITY COLLEGE GOVERNANCE RESEARCH

Interview Guide for _____ Date _____

Current Information

1. Student headcount:_____

2. F T Faculty:_____ P T Faculty:_____

3. Tuition cost to students, by term:_____ fees?_____

4. Limits on student numbers? Y____ N____ on programs to offer? Y____ N____ Limits set by statute? Y____ N___

5. Typical students have _____ years of formal schooling prior to entry into programs.

6. Number of members on governing board: _____

7. Terms of board service, in years: _____

8. Standing board committees? Y____ N____ Number of committees: _____ Special committees? Y____ N____

   Names/Titles:_____

9. Board elected? Y____ N____ appointed? Y____ N____

10. Number of regular board meetings per year: _____ Statutory? ____ Number of special board meetings in 1992:___

11. Agendas circulated in advance of meetings? Y____ N____ Agendas are developed by:_____

12. Typical length of board meetings (hours): _____

13. Typically, meetings are disputatious-smooth-agreeable: (Interviewees A-D) Rank on scale: 1----------5----------10
    A.
    B.
    C.
    D.

14. Are minutes of board meetings kept verbatim? Y____ N____

15. Does every board member have an up-to-date policy book? Y____ N____ How frequently updated?_____